

## Short Notes

Compiled by A. McG. Stirling

### Botanical

#### Plant records for Argyll, V.C.98, in 1994

B.H. THOMPSON

While no native species new to Argyll turned up during the year, previously unrecorded introductions continue to be found. Persian Ivy (*Hedera colchica*) is well established in estate woodland near Ford and almost certainly occurs in similar places elsewhere in V.C.98.

Des Etangs' St. John's-wort (*Hypericum x desetangsii*) occurs sparingly at the head of Loch Feochan and is assumed to be an introduction as neither parent is known in that area. Dr N.K.B. Robson thinks it most likely that this plant is the hybrid *H. maculatum* subsp. *maculatum* x *H. perforatum* (= *H. x desetangsii* nothovar. *carinthiacum*). Oxford Ragwort (*Senecio squalidus*) has managed to reach waste ground at Oban and in the same area, on railway ballast, Rat's-tail Fescue (*Vulpia myuros*) has established itself quite plentifully.

A single bush of the hybrid between Glaucous Northern Dog-rose (*Rosa caesia* subsp. *glauca*) and Sweet-briar (*R. rubiginosa*) was found by the main road in the Strath of Appin. As the last parent is thought not to be indigenous in the west of Scotland it is presumed that the bush was introduced or that the Sweet-briar parent was in cultivation locally.

A single bush of Dwarf Gorse (*Ulex minor*) was noted beside a forest track near Kilmartin and is the first modern record for the vice-county. The use of a construction machine which had previously been in Hampshire indicates the probable means of introduction. A good population of Bird's-foot (*Ornithopus perpusillus*) on a forest track east of Dalmally, the third record for V.C.98, is another example of this sort of introduction.

Visits during the year to the islands of Shuna, at the mouth of Loch Melfort, and to Lismore produced further interesting records of native species.

On the coastal limestone in north-west Shuna a small population of Common Gromwell (*Lithospermum officianale*) (Plate 3a., p.533), first noted here by A.A. Slack and A.McG. Stirling in 1964, continues to flourish. Only one other site is known for the species in V.C.98. In nearby rocky limestone woodland, Goldilocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*) was growing more plentifully than at any other of its very few Argyll sites.

On Lismore Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*) was found to be much more frequent than previously supposed on the raised-beach cliffs of the east and north. A small colony has since been seen in a very similar habitat in north-east Kerrera. Another Lismore plant which proved to be more wide-spread than previously supposed is Small Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum sylvaticum*). First discovered on the island in 1991 by Slack and Stirling in hazel woodland on the north-west coast this has now been found in the same type of woodland habitat west of Kilcheran Loch and on the west coast south of Achadun. Coastal woodland in the north-west also produced Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*) known elsewhere in the vice-county only at Port Appin on the mainland.

Southern Polypody (*Polypodium cambricum*), first found on a raised-beach cliff south of Achnacroish, Lismore, in 1974, was seen at two new sites on the cliffs further south. This fern is here at its furthest north known locality in the British Isles.

Round-fruited Rush (*Juncus compressus*) was refound on Lismore after a lapse of 45 years, having been seen west of Balnagowan by W.A. Sledge and E.C. Wallace in 1949. The only other Argyll record for this rush is from Insh Island but this needs confirmation as large plants of Saltmarsh Rush (*Juncus gerardii*) can be confused with this species.

Also on this splendid island an interesting hybrid rose was found: Burnet Rose (*Rosa pimpinellifolia*) x Soft Downy Rose (*R. mollis*) = *R. x sabinii* growing at the foot of the raised-beach cliff near Castle Coeffin accompanied by very large bushes of Burnet Rose, one of the parents.

Finally the elusive, and definitely rare, Adder`s-tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) was seen only once in 1994 (a few plants at one new locality on Lismore) and the even more elusive Bog Orchid (*Hammar-*

*bya paludosa*) twice (once north of Loch Avich and once south of Loch Awe).

### **A peculiar Foxglove - *Digitalis monstrosa***

JOHN.R.S. LYTH

On 17th June 1994, in the company of some students of L'Ecole des Plantes, Paris, I found some 24 to 30 specimens of a peculiar Foxglove growing on the machair beside the first fairway of Blackwaterfoot Golf Course, Arran. The terminal flowers of the spike had become fused together and resembled an upward-pointing Canterbury Bell.

It would appear from an article by Dr Stephen Buczacki in the August 1994 edition of the BBC publication *Gardeners' World* that they are *Digitalis monstrosa*, the Gloxinia-flowered Foxglove, an aberration which "apparently comes true if seed is collected from affected plants".

Some of the 30 specimens are now in Paris and elsewhere!

### **Hoary Mugwort (*Artemisia stelleriana*) in Ayrshire.**

A. McG. STIRLING

In late October 1994 Mr E. Nugent of Troon reported to me that he had found *Artemisia stelleriana* on the shore between Barassie and Gailes, Ayrshire, V.C.75. The plant, a white tomentose perennial with rhizomatose rootstock, is an introduction in the British Isles, being a native of Kamchatka.

On 27th October I visited the area Mr Nugent had indicated and had no difficulty finding the plants in kilometer square NS 32-34-. A number of clumps of varying size, the largest being up to 3 or 4 feet in circumference, were scattered along the beach over a distance of about 300 yards. They were growing in loose sand on the upper shore among Marram and Lyme Grass. Other accompanying plants included Sea Sandwort (*Honckenya peploides*), Sea Rocket (*Cakile maritima*) and Prickly Saltwort (*Salsola kali*). The more mature clumps had flowered freely, and even at this late date a few fresh flowers were noted.

This is the third locality where Hoary Mugwort has been found in south-west Scotland, the others being on the Solway shore in Kirkcudbrightshire and at Brodick Bay, Arran. Interesting accounts of the plant